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TITLE: System and method for distributing information through cooperative communication network sites

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ABSTRACT:

CHG DATE=20001128 STATUS=> Information pertaining to products made by manufacturers and sold to consumers through retailers, is distributed to consumers through a communication network that connects consumer communication nodes to a cooperative network site having an accumulation of information about manufacturer product offers and retailer special deals. A consumer can obtain selected items of this information without knowledge of how to reach the cooperative network site, by simply logging in to a manufacturer network site or to a retailer network site. At a manufacturer site, the consumer can obtain a list of local retailers carrying the manufacturer offers and can then select from among the offers and receive complete details of the selected offers. At a retailer site, the consumer can obtain a list of manufacturer offers available at the retailer stores in the consumer's area, and can then select from among the available offers and receive their complete details. An additional feature of the invention makes use of a consumer "personal page," which is an individualized database in which consumer shopping preferences are defined, both by information that the consumer expressly provides and by the consumer's past shopping activity. Use of the personal page allows the consumer to receive product offers that are more targeted to the individual consumer, thus saving the consumer time and effort. Another embodiment of the invention provides for distribution of a product purchase incentive directly to the consumer in response to his or her selection of an advertising banner displayed on an independent commercial network site.